7 KEYS OF SEXUAL CONSENT

WHAT DOES THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE SAY?

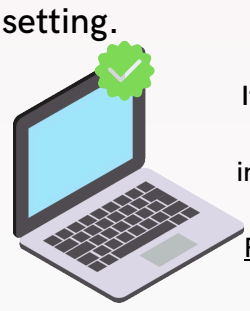
All actions concerning sexual consent must be based on scientific evidence of social impact.

Demand the evidence! What are they telling you and where has it worked?

1 DISTINGUISHING HOAXES FROM EVIDENCE

Don't be taken in!

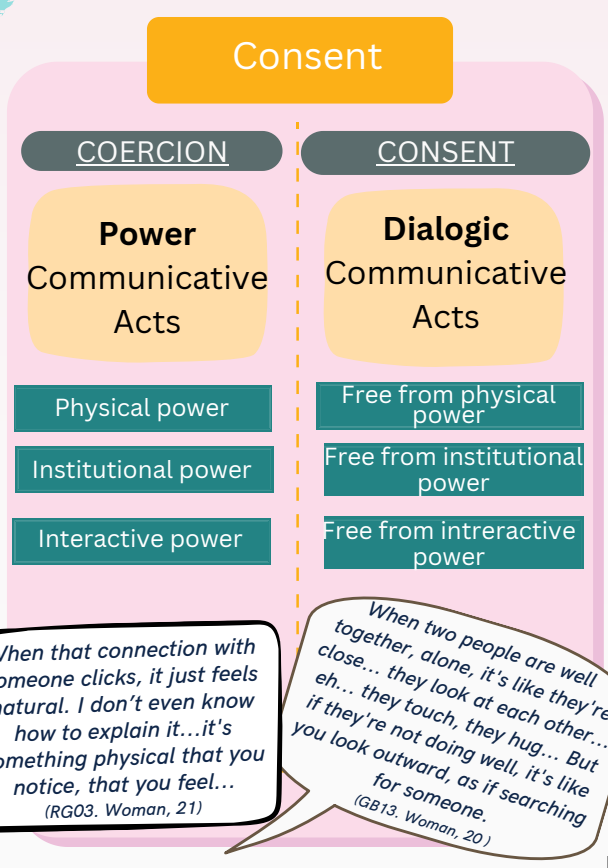
Neither "no" means yes, nor is every "yes" free of coercion, for example if there is a threat of a weapon. Analyse the *communicative acts* that frame interactions to determine not only whether a "verbal yes" was uttered but whether consent was given in a genuinely free space or was coerced by some power intraction or the nature of the setting.



If you want to know more about *sexual consent* or have doubts about the issue you can check out the information on gender topics on the citizen participation platform Sappho and the articles published by Diario Feminista and on the website of the CONSENT project. All the information from these sources has been fact-checked by the international scientific community.

When there's consent, you can tell!
If you have doubts, make sure the environment is one of freedom.

2 REMEMBER THAT...



When that connection with someone clicks, it just feels natural. I don't even know how to explain it...it's something physical that you notice, that you feel...
(RG03. Woman, 21)

When two people are well together, alone, it's like they're close... they look at each other... eh... they touch, they hug... But if they're not doing well, it's like you look outward, as if searching for someone.
(GB13. Woman, 20)

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3 IDENTIFY INTERACTIVE POWER

Some situations of *interactive power* (the power given by the interaction established between the people involved) are so normalized that we accept them without question. You may have witnessed or experienced many of these.

If you keep pushing and pushing, eventually... you think 'persistence pays off', but it doesn't work like that. What actually happens is that, out of exhaustion and just wanting to feel safe, you go, 'Fine. Whatever, I'll just do it.' But that doesn't mean the other person wanted it. I mean, it's not like that at all. Because if you said no the fifteen times they've asked... you don't suddenly changed your mind the sixteenth time and think, 'Oh yeah, now I'm totally into it.'
(CL29. Woman, 21)

Does any of this sound familiar?

I know of friendship groups where they're out partying, and... one guy buys a girl a drink, and then suddenly the whole group, not just him but all of them, start going, 'Make out... make out... you said yes to the drink...make out...' And she's just like, 'I don't want to'...
(ZD18. Man, 20)

This interactive power does not only occur at the moment of the aggression; it can begin in various interactions with other people prior to the aggression, in an environment dominated by a coercive discourse such as:

Don't let anyone control you, and don't let them control anyone else

When a guy's friends are telling him to go for it, and he keeps saying no, they're like, 'Are you an idiot or what? What's wrong with you?' (...) Then they start making comments like, 'He's probably asexual', or 'Maybe he's gay', saying stuff like that behind his back.
ET60. Man, 22

Also, my friends keep getting in my head all the time. 'Maybe now's the time', or 'Maybe I need to make a move,' or 'Maybe I need to pressure the girl.
ES98. Man, 22

A lot of my friends have ended up in situations they didn't actually want, not even because of pressure from the guy, but more from the environment. Comments like: 'If you don't hook up with him, you're being stupid...' 'You're at an age where you should start having these kinds of relationships... and take the initiative to have them.'
(CF17. Woman , 20)

Freedom or coercion?

(...) Yeah, when I get back to the group, they're like, 'What? Man...you should've just gone for it... you were already with her...just, you know, done something...had some fun.'
(AB19. Man, 21)

Recognizing this coercive discourse, and the complicity of third parties in coercieve situations, can be crucial in legal contexts:

Interviewer: Is there a way to insist that the alleged aggressor must demonstrate that they had ensured a violence-free environment?

CM73 (judge): I can't find him guilty if someone was pressuring him to get involved with the girl... But you can consider them accomplices.

COV64 (lawyer): That might help, but the victim needs to know this too; when she starts, she should explain it that way. The narrative should begin like that, because if you bring it up on the day of the trial, they'll say you don't need to explain it because now...

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4 UPSTANDERS: CREATING SAFE SPACES

You may sometimes feel insecure with the person you are with if he or she ignores your signals.

Try to establish contact with people around you so that they can lend you a hand. If you are the outsider witnessing this type of situation, think about the best and safest way to help.

> (...) So, the girls said: leave him alone. If he doesn't want anything, if he wants to be here with you, you don't have to force him to do it.
>
> (XG03. Man, 18)

Even some friendships have agreed-upon help signals in order to protect themselves from coercive situations:

> *In my friendship group, we have a signal we use if someone's bothering us, and we want someone to like, 'rescue' us. It's a subtle sign [...] We're always kind of watching out for each other, and if we suddenly make the signal, someone jumps in with a, 'Hey, wanna come to the bathroom with me?' or 'Hey...I'm totally lost...' And we'll do a little rescue move.*
> (JB02. Woman, 25)

You can also take a stand by showing your rejection of known situations of *lack of consent* in social networks or in public discussions:

> *[...] it's not a sexy movie; she was literally kidnapped and forced into violent sex [...] Consent is a turn-on for me, sorry :)*
> *(Tweet)*

5 PROTECT FROM IGV ISOLATING GENDER VIOLENCE

When these people intervene and take a stand in coercive situations, they often face backlash and may be labeled as "kill-joys" by their peers.

> *Pretty much the same situation - guy buys girl a drink... she doesn't want to do anything... and then the group starts pushing. And I'm the one who steps in, saying, 'Enough', because I can see the girl is uncomfortable, and I don't want her to have a bad time. And yeah, I definetly feel that vibe...everyone looking at me differently... like no one says it out loud, the look changes, the attitude changes... like you become the group's kill-joy*
> (ZD18 Man, 20)

It's important to highlight the bravery of these people, as they play a crucial role in stopping violence.

> If this happens to you or someone else in the Basque Country (article 50.4 of Law 1/2022); or Catalonia (Article 4.3 of Law 17/2020), you can report it.

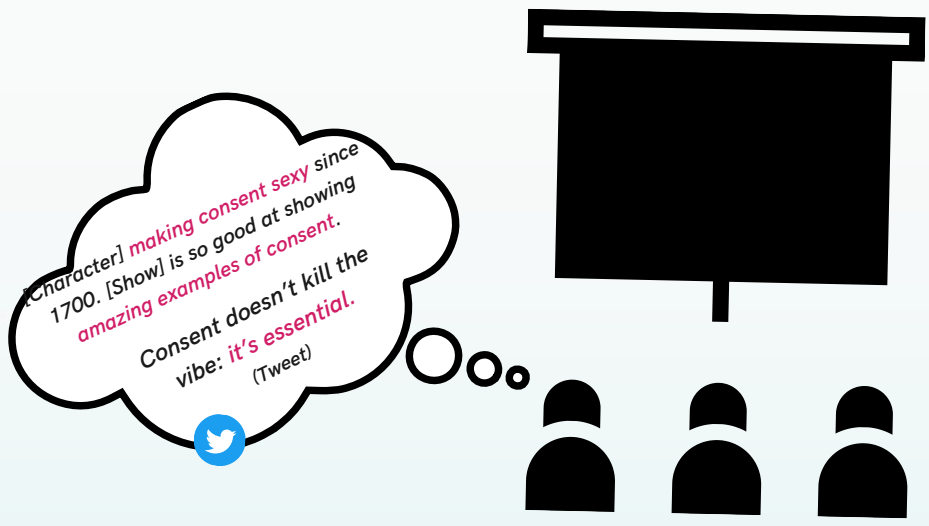
6 NAM NEW ALTERNATIVE MASCULINITIES

No! Not all men around you are potential aggressors: this is a hoax. The truth is that there are many guys, the NAMs, who respect consent, will always take a stand to protect you from violent situations, will never try to take advantage of you and with whom you will feel truly free.

> *There are guys who respect consent and those who don't. Some guys can take a no, and some can't. There are guys who give in to peer pressure, and others who don't. There are different types - those who treat others with respect, and those who don't.*
> (ES98. Man, 22)

> *Meanwhile, there are guys who are just geniunely nice people who always consider other people's feelings, who respect others and who've gotten a 'no' at some point. I think there really are different types of guys.*
> (TF15. Man, 22)

NAMs exist in real life and in the series and movies we watch:



7 START A CONVERSATION

Engage in dialogue with brave friends about the "coerced yes" and the coercive discourse we experience daily, as explained by scientific evidence of social impact, helps recognize these situations now and in the future. Understanding the socially relevant scientific evidence You can even give experiences you've had the appropriate label so that you can reject them moving forward.

> *By talking about our experiences, and specially realizing that we often have given "false consent", or that we really didn't understand what it meant.*
>
> (RC24. Woman, 24)

> *Watching XXX, and realizing that most of my dating experiences with guys have had some kind of pressure/manipulation + left me feeling violated, hurt, and sometimes scared. I'm angry. I deserve so much better.*
>
> *(Tweet)*

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